LOOP GROUP - LIVING WELL

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I HAVE SOME IDEAS ABOUT IT - THEY COME FROM:

1 - WHAT I HAVE PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED . .

2 - AND WHAT I BELIEVE AND ASPIRE TO, BUT ONLY PARTIALLY EXPERIENCE -

3 - AND MOSTLY FROM MY FAITH - FROM THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE; MORE SPECIFICALLY THE PRESBYTERIAN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE, WORLD AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A FULLY ALIVE HUMAN BEING.

A STARTING PLACE MIGHT BE TO DEFINE IT -

LIVING WELL - WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

HAPPINESS - WHOLENESS - FULL AND SATISFYING LIFE

WE'RE NOT EXACTLY STARTING FROM SCRATCH.

How define? Good project - to identify, for each, what it means - longevity health security contentment happiness excitement risks in fact. perhaps we should give it some thought today in this pursuit.

What constitutes the summum bonum - the greatest good.

PHILOSOPHY HAS BEEN ASKING ABOUT the good life SINCE EARLIEST HUMAN INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT

PLATO - ARISTOTLE - GREEKS Philosophy - focused on

— THE IDEA OF BALANCE BETWEEN MIND - BODY - SPIRIT.

VIRTUES OF COURAGE, STRENGTH, TRUTH, BEAUTY.. Living well was: balance homeostasis - equilibrium

MODERATION IN ALL THINGS

AND THEN THERE IS A BIG SPLIT PHILOSOPHICALLY Bet ~~BUT~~ THOSE WHO SEEK IT IN THE WORLD, AND THOSE WHO SEEK IT ELSEWHERE.

HEDONISTS - IF IT FEELS GOOD, DO IT; - LIVING WELL AS SATISFACTION OF PHYSICAL APPETITES FOR FOOD, SEX, EXCITEMENT. eat drink & be merry for tomorrow we die

a variation on the theme

EPICUREANS - THOSE WHO SEEK EXCELLENCE IN THAT SAME PURSUIT, LOVE: GOOD FOOD, WINE, SEX - ~~OPPOSITES~~ the quintessential 'this world' school.

REPRESENTED BY STOICS - WHO SAID DON'T

the opposite

GET TO INTO YOUR APPETITES, IN FACT, LEARN TO CONTROL AND ULTIMATELY DENY. -

(THEY NOTICED SOMETHING CONSISTENT ABOUT THE HEDONISTS - THEY WERE NEVER SATISFIED, GRATIFIED, AS AN END IN ITSELF SEEMS ONLY TO PUNCTUATE ITS OWN IMPOTENCE - THERE IS ALWAYS A [redacted] MEAL, BOTTLE, OR SEXUAL EXPERIENCE - SO HEDONISTS SEEM PRETTY FRUSTRATED. THEY ALSO DIED YOUNG OF VENEREAL DISEASE, GOUT, LIVER DISEASE.)

SO STOICS SAID - DON'T COMMIT TO THAT

LEARN TO BE HAPPY WITH YOUR CURRENT SITUATION AND FORGET ABOUT THE PURSUIT OF PLEASURE AS AN END IN ITSELF.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH BOUGHT INTO THIS EARLY ON - AND FOR 1,000 SEEMED TO SAY THAT TRUE HAPPINESS IS ALWAYS IN WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WORLD AND WORLDLY PLEASURES.

MODERATION IN ALL THINGS - CAME OUT AS A LIFE DENYING, PLEASURE DENYING AS asceticism

SYMBOLIZED IN THE IMAGE OF THE CELIBATE, saint ~~SAINT~~ (REFLECTED IN EASTERN CULTURE IN IMAGE OF ~~SWAMI~~ Holy Man - ON BED OF NAILS, STARING AT SUN UNTIL BLIND) - ultimate mortification of flesh + denial of

and in other cultures, particularly Eastern

What Master + Johnson called the Pleasure Principle

WHAT DOES OUR TRADITION ACTUALLY SAY?

WE ARE PART OF CREATION - PUT HERE FOR A PURPOSE - TO EXERCISE DOMINION - TO LOVE AND CARE FOR EACH OTHER AND WITH THESE 2 ETHICAL PRINCIPLES:

(1) RESPONSIBILITY
(CARE FOR OTHERS)

(2) TO ENJOY THE PLACE.

CATECHISM - WESTMINSTER CHURCH END OF MAN? GLORIFY GOD AND ENJOY GOD

CURIOUS? ENJOY

The older,

HEBREW TRADITION KNEW NOTHING OF PHILOSOPHIC SPLIT BUT ~~WORLDER~~ Between worlds AND OTHER WORLDLY.

WOULD NEVER HAVE PROPOSED THAT LIVING WELL IS WITHDRAWAL FROM WORLD OR DENIAL OF GOODNESS.

INSTEAD, HAPPINESS - ~~LIVING~~ LIVING WELL IN Hebrew Scripture ~~SCRIPT~~, IS A PRODUCT OF SOME PRETTY TANGIBLE THINGS:

GOOD FOOD ON TABLE - RICH AND FATTY FOOD, God is praised +1

GOOD WINE

STABLE FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

-(RESPONSIBLE POSITION ~~IN~~ VIS A VIS THE COMMUNITY) Ps. 1 - Happy is man - like a tree planted by river - AND RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD - WHICH MEANT SPECIFICALLY - A FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD - AND WORKING RELATIONSHIP REPRESENTED BY OBEDIENCE AND LOVE, KINDNESS TO NEIGHBORS, GENEROSITY AND JUSTICE

Ps 128 Happy is - You shall eat the fruit of your labor wife is like fruitful vine -

AND A LIFE OF JOYFUL, GRATEFUL PRAISE.

Summed up in Hebrew word?

SHALOM - PEACE, HEALTH, RECONCILIATION, WHOLENESS

II MY EXPERIENCE - OR A SHORT HISTORY OF MY SUCCESSES AND FAILURES AT LIVING WELL.

A. I OBSERVE THAT WE EXPERIENCE THIS DIFFERENTLY - AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF LIFE.

I'M NOT SURE I THOUGHT NEED ABOUT IT FOR MUCH OF THE FIRST 25 YEARS - LIFE JUST HAPPENED: LOTS OF IT - BIG CHUNKS OF IT - SOME BUSY - SOME EMPTY - BUT NOT MUCH SELF-AWARENESS

I DO RECALL - AFTER GRAD SCHOOL, ORDINATION, MARRIAGE, AND PARENTING - THE ONSET OF A MALAISE - SOMETHING MISSING -WHAT IS IT?

I DO RECALL IN 30s SENSE THAT OTHERS WERE GETTING AHEAD AND I WASN'T.

CITE TRIP TO SEE OLD FRIENDS:

LAWYER, BROKER, IBM SALESMAN, DOCTOR,

ALL DOING VERY WELL. \WE WERE STRUG-

GLING.

I ALSO RECALL MOMENTS OF PROFOUND

HAPPINESS - ALMOST BLISS -

— WITH BIRTH OF CHILDREN

— WITH OCCASIONAL SENSE OF WORK WELL

DONE

— (AT THAT POINT I LEARNED JOY OF

MANUAL LABOR AGAIN-|GARDENING, YARD

WORK: |CONTRAST TO MINISTRY - IN WHICH

YOU ARE NEVER DONE...

AND MY IMAGE OF CONTENTMENT IS

PRETTY MUNDANE - SATURDAY EVENING | 7 PM

ON MY PATIO IN LAFAYETTE |- GRASS IS CUT,

GARDEN WEEDED,\CAR WASHED,\SHOES SHINED,

KIDS ARE BATHED AND ON WAY TO BED,

SERMON IS WRITTEN AND READY, CHARCOAL

— at least one of my images - comes from that time + it's pretty mundane

HAS BEEN LIGHTED, STEAKS ARE READY, WINE (I THINK WE WERE DRINKING LANCERS OR---) COOLING... STILL NOT BAD PICTURE!

I THINK MANY OF US HAVE TROUBLE IN OUR 30S AND 40S WITH THIS WHOLE SUBJECT:

FOR ONE THING, WE'RE USUALLY OVERWORKED, TRYING TO GET ESTABLISHED PROFESSIONALLY. WE DON'T GIVE OURSELVES MUCH TIME AND WHEN WE DO, WE WORRY ABOUT THE WORK WE'RE NOT DOING.

-PARENTING IS MORE THAN FULL-TIME - IT SIMPLY NEVER STOPS - FROM EARLY MORNING TO LATE NIGHT.

IN ADDITION, WE LIVE ON EDGE OF BANKRUPTCY. WE ARE NOTORIOUSLY BROKE. MORTGAGED, IN DEBT, BEHIND, WITHOUT MUCH RELIEF IN SIGHT.

NO WONDER IT'S TOUGH TO BE 30-40 AND HAPPY.

X To be 30- is to worry a lot- -- if not married, or connected relationally- why not? what if I can't find some!

If we are- the permanence sets in so we worry- can this last? I would if he- she- or we are- might not have been better for me... etc. etc.

WE URBAN DWELLERS COULD ADD TO THAT series of laments
A PACE OF LIFE THAT IS BOTH WONDERFUL AND INSANE - WE LIVE FAST AND HARD AND FILL EACH DAY WITH ACTIVITY, WE, I AM CONVINCED, WALK FASTER, EAT FASTER, LIVE TWICE AS FAST AS OTHERS.

PARTICULARLY PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES: ITALY, FRANCE - MEALS, FOR INSTANCE, ALL-EVENING EVENTS. NO HURRYING, UNLESS SUE SLOWS ME DOWN - I START LOOKING AT MY WATCH AS SOON AS WE SIT DOWN.

IS THERE NO WAY TO DO BETTER ? TO CUT THROUGH OUR LIFE STYLE AND CULTURAL NORMS - OR ARE WE CAUGHT IN MAZE OF UNHAPPINESS - UNFILLED?

CAN WE LIVE WELL? IN SPITE OF OUR INCOME - OR LACK: RELATIONSHIPS - OR ABSENCE OF AND CAN WE DO IT WITH INTEGRITY?

IS THERE A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE THAT ISN'T [redacted] WARMED OVER STOICISM - OR OVERLY ROMANTICIZED MONASTICISM, I.E. DOWNSIZE, SELL OUT, MOVE TO WISCONSIN AND OPEN A CHEESE AND WINE STORE (WHICH WILL REQUIRE 24 HOURS OF EVERY DAY!)

I THINK SO.

MY [redacted] IS ONE OF BEST STORIES JESUS TOLD - GOOD SAMARITAN.

ACTUALLY, IT'S THE QUESTION THAT PRECEDES:

LAWYER - TEACHER - WHAT MUST I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE? (---LIFE, -FOR HIM -; NOT LIFE AFTER DEATH, BUT FULL - JOYFUL LIFE NOW: A METAPHOR FOR LIVING WELL.)

WHAT SHALL I DO TO LIVE WELL?

JESUS - WHAT DOES OUR LAW (JUDAISM) SAY?

LAWYER :- LOVE GOD WITH HEART, SOUL, STRENGTH, MIND : Neighbor as self

LOVE NEIGHBOR AS SELF

3 LOVES (~~C.S. LEWIS~~) ~~4 LOVES~~

LAWYER - WHO IS NEIGHBOR? THEN PARABLE -

LET'S ~~CONFIRM~~ CONFINE - TO THE QUESTION AND THE ANSWER \ 3 LOVES TO WHICH JESUS RESPONDED - - -

" DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE -

GOD, NEIGHBOR, SELF

START WITH NUMBER 3

LOVE SELF - VALUE YOURSELF -| YOU ARE CHILD OF GOD \ YOU CAN AFFORD SELF-ESTEEM, BECAUSE YOUR CREATOR LOVES YOU.

IT'S NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE YOU ARE LOVABLE -| SO MUCH AS THE CREATOR IS LOVING. (theology of grace)

NOT ABSTRACTION: — we actually believe Ps & - crowned w/ dignity / know little less than God.

behavioral implications? → TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

DON'T DRINK, EAT YOURSELF TO DEATH.

DON'T ENGAGE IN DESTRUCTIVE BEHAV-IOR

DON'T SMOKE AND BE CAREFUL ABOUT YOUR intimate RELATIONSHIPS - BOTH OF WHICH CAN MAKE YOU VERY SICK AND KILL YOU.

TAKE CARE OF BODY - EXERCISE

LEARN TO RELAX

IDENTIFY WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE, SIGH, LAUGH AND MAKE CERTAIN YOU PROVIDE IT.

BE NICE TO YOURSELF. Give yourself a break today - not at MacDonalds but a 30 min. walk on Lakefront

THIS IS NOT EASY FOR MANY, IF NOT MOST OF US. WE THINK, MISTAKENLY, THAT WE ARE SUPPOSED TO FORGET SELF. (I'm not who quilt here)

2. LOVE NEIGHBOR:

WE ARE NOT MADE FOR LIFE ALONE. WE LIVE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS. IT IS SAID THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS SOLITARY JEW (CHRISTIAN) HUMAN BEING.

OUR RELATIONSHIPS ARE CRITICAL: SOURCE OF BOTH HAPPINESS AND UNHAPPINESS.

set your priorities
My kids gave me pleasure - so I stopped denying myself + attended to them

of my primary relationships give me pleasure - attend! - give time. self energy. magnify love --

FOR MANY - PRIMARY, PRIMAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE TROUBLESOME:

A) PARENTS/SIBLINGS - SO, TEND TO THEM - DON'T LET THEM POISON LIFE, DEAL WITH THEM, SEEK HELP IF NECESSARY -

ALL OF US - & FORGIVE OUR PARENTS FOR ALL THEIR FAILURES - AND GET ON WITH LIFE.

Stephen Covey's cultural mirrors + see self genetic - psychic - environment

B. BEYOND FAMILY - OUR COMMUNITIES -

AT WORK

PLACE OF RESIDENCE

REACH OUT -

BE KIND, ATTENTIVE, GRACIOUS AND BE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY + EXERCISE CARE FOR THE PERSON IN NEXT APARTMENT WHOSE MOTHER DIED + AND ALSO THE FAMILIES OF CABRINI - OUR NEIGHBORS -WHO NEED ALL OF US.

C) SCHWEITZER TO ~~STATE~~ STDOS " YOU WILL ONLY BE HAPPY IF YOU FIND SOMEONE TO SERVE. "

~~3. LOVE GOD~~

Behavioral Implication - say it / do it

call parents - I love you

.. your sig. oth ... ..

give a gift "

Reach out - + make know you will

must someone who needs comfort - affirmation

encouragement - sympathy ..

3. Love God

— AUGUSTINE - 4TH CENTURY - IN THE MIDST OF HIS OWN STRUGGLE TO LIVE WELL - WHICH BEGAN IN HEDONISM AND ENDED IN ASCETICISM: "in his 20's - in midst of round the clock partying he was praying 'O God .. make me pious, & holy & chaste - but not quite yet.'

— "THOU HAST MADE OUR HEARTS RESTLESS UNTIL THEY FIND THEIR REST IN THEE."

WE ARE HUNGRY FOR GOD - A YEARNING/LONGING FOR TRANSCENDENCE IN US.

SO, I [redacted]K THERE IS A SPIRITUAL DIMENSION THAT IS FOUNDATIONAL TO LIVING WELL -

BIG MARKET FOR THIS

LOTS OF BOOKS

NEW INTEREST IN SPIRITUALITY

OTHER RELIGIONS - EASTERN MEDITATION TECHNIQUES.

to Behavioral Implications → SPIRITUAL COMPONENT

A. REGULAR PUBLIC WORSHIP - (WHEN I CAN'T PRAISE GOD BECAUSE I'M OVERWHELMED

BY LIFE AND STRUGGLE, THE COMMUNITY HELPS ME)

B. Prayer — ONE HOUR SITTING IN PRESENCE OF GOD MEDITATION - PRAYER - RELAXATION - GETTING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR OWN SPIRIT.

C BELONGING TO A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS WHO SHARE THE JOURNEY - AND WHO LIVE, AT LEAST IN PART, FOR OTHERS AND FOR THE WORLD.

Concluding Post Script

Finally - Be grateful. — dying of cancer — good man -

cite D. Harden — every day — found.. sanity + thank God

Helmut Thielicke: happiness ultimately gratitude expressed

Gerald May M.D.